United Nations E/2015/7

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
22 January 2015

Original: English

2015 session
21 July 2014-22 July 2015
Agenda item 20
United Nations research and training institutes

Report of the Council of the United Nations University on the work of the University

Contents

		Page
I.	Introduction	2
II.	Overview	3
III.	Institutional development	4
IV.	Institutional priorities	8
V.	Research projects	11
VI.	Postgraduate education	17
VII.	Events	19
VIII.	Communication and dissemination	21
IX.	Financial and human resources	22
Annex		
	Members of the Council of the United Nations University	23

15-00810 (E) 130215

Please recycle

I. Introduction

1. Late in 2014, the United Nations University (UNU) entered its fortieth year of operation. Since September 1975, when it commenced activities in Tokyo with a staff of fewer than 30 and a first-year budget of US$3.6 million, UNU has grown to become a global network of research and training institutes with a staff of 479 and an annual budget of more than $65 million.

2. Over these four decades, a host of new challenges have emerged — many of them growing in scale and complexity, and spanning diverse policy fields. Although the world has seen significant advances in poverty reduction, economic growth, and human development indicators, pervasive inequalities remain. The impacts of climate change and environmental degradation, meanwhile, threaten the sustainability of this hard-won progress. And while noteworthy progress has been made towards attaining the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, many countries will miss the 2015 deadline for multiple targets.

3. The reality is that existing policies and international structures are often ill-equipped to respond to today's global challenges. It has become increasingly apparent to UNU that in order to contribute effectively to solving today's challenges, the operational and research models developed decades ago must be constantly re-examined.

4. Under its sixth Rector, David M. Malone, UNU is implementing a number of institutional changes to become more responsive to the needs of the United Nations and its Member States, and to enhance the tangible impact of UNU research on intergovernmental deliberations and policy. These include, inter alia, a renewed effort to build policy linkages with the rest of the United Nations system, the development of larger and more ambitious research projects, and a re-energization of fund-raising efforts. The aim is to position UNU as an agile player in both the research and policy development arenas, and to broaden its community of donors and supporters.

5. The focus of UNU, in accordance with its Charter, is to assist in finding solutions to pressing global problems, with a particular focus on the needs of developing countries. To this end, UNU research strives to integrate knowledge from multiple disciplines so as to better understand complex problems and evaluate the potential efficacy of alternative solutions.

6. UNU has always produced research with strong academic and scientific value — but that research has not always generated policy-relevant knowledge. The aim of the ongoing institutional changes is to focus UNU research more specifically on identifying practical solutions to real problems, and to translate those findings into knowledge that can contribute to important policy debates within the United Nations system.

7. UNU research and knowledge-generation activities will hereafter take account of the needs of the United Nations (the United Nations Secretariat, deliberative bodies such as the General Assembly and Security Council, and United Nations system agencies) towards the fulfilment of the University's think-tank role.

8. The present report provides an overview of the recent institutional developments and new priorities that will shape the UNU of the future, as well as a snapshot of the major activities and achievements of UNU in 2014.

II. Overview

9. The United Nations University is a solution-focused think tank and research organization. Its mission is to contribute to efforts to resolve "the pressing global problems of human survival, development and welfare that are the concern of the United Nations and its agencies". Functioning under the joint sponsorship of the United Nations and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), UNU operates as a global network of academic institutes and programmes coordinated by the UNU Centre.

10. As a think tank for the United Nations system, UNU undertakes focused, policy-relevant research that can offer objective, science-based perspectives in the service of policy debate and development. UNU carries out its work in collaboration with other entities of the United Nations system (agencies, programmes, commissions, funds and convention secretariats) and with leading universities, research institutes and think tanks worldwide, thereby acting as a bridge between United Nations policy communities and academic communities, particularly those in developing countries.

11. The **UNU Council** serves as the governing board of the University. The Council, inter alia, formulates the principles and policies of UNU and advises on/approves the UNU work programme and biennial budget. Members of the Council — who serve in an individual capacity rather than as representatives of their countries — are appointed by the Secretary-General of the United Nations with the concurrence of the Director-General of UNESCO. In addition to these appointed members, the Council includes the UNU Rector and three ex officio members, namely, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the Director-General of UNESCO and the Executive Director of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR).

12. The **UNU Rector** is responsible to the Council for the direction, administration, programming and coordination of the University. The Rector, who holds the rank of Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations, is based at the UNU Centre in Tokyo.

13. The **UNU Centre** comprises a headquarters unit in Tokyo (Office of the Rector, UNU Centre for Policy Research, Administration, Campus Computing Centre, and Office of Communications) as well as the UNU Vice-Rectorate in Europe in Bonn, an administrative services unit in Kuala Lumpur, and liaison offices at the United Nations in New York and at UNESCO in Paris.

14. The academic work of the University in 2014 was carried out by its global network of research and training institutes and programmes:

- UNU-BIOLAC — UNU Programme for Biotechnology in Latin America and the Caribbean, Caracas (established in 1988)
- UNU-CRIS — UNU Institute on Comparative Regional Integration Studies, Bruges, Belgium (2001)
- UNU-EHS — UNU Institute for Environment and Human Security, Bonn, Germany (2003)
- UNU-FLORES — UNU Institute for Integrated Management of Material Fluxes and of Resources, Dresden, Germany (2012)

- UNU-GCM — UNU Institute on Globalization, Culture and Mobility, Barcelona, Spain (2012)
- UNU-IAS — UNU Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability, Tokyo (2014)
- UNU-IIGH — UNU International Institute for Global Health, Kuala Lumpur (2007)
- UNU-INRA — UNU Institute for Natural Resources in Africa, Accra (1990)
- UNU-INWEH — UNU Institute for Water, Environment and Health, Hamilton, Canada (1996)
- UNU-MERIT — UNU Maastricht Economic and Social Research Institute on Innovation and Technology, Maastricht, Netherlands (2007)
- UNU-WIDER — UNU World Institute for Development Economics Research, Helsinki (1985)
- UNU Iceland-based programmes — UNU Geothermal Training Programme (UNU-GTP; 1979), UNU Fisheries Training Programme (UNU-FTP; 1998), UNU Land Restoration Training Programme (UNU-LRT; 2010), UNU Gender Equality Studies and Training Programme (UNU-GEST; 2013), Reykjavik

III. Institutional development

15. UNU was very active with respect to institutional development in 2014, as evidenced by the following examples.

Council sessions

16. In 2014, the UNU Council convened in two sessions.

17. At its sixty-first session, held on 12 and 13 May in Rome, the UNU Council, inter alia:

(a) Reviewed and discussed the strategic plans of the individual UNU institutes and programmes, and the proposed outline and elements of the UNU strategic plan 2015-2019;

(b) Considered and approved revisions to the 2014-2015 biennial budget;

(c) Reviewed the progress and status of ongoing and new institutional development initiatives, including the establishment of the UNU Institute for Sustainable Development;

(d) Adopted the statute of the UNU Operating Unit on Policy-driven Electronic Governance, and approved the text of the host country agreement and bilateral agreement;

(e) Adopted the statute of the consolidated UNU Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability.

18. At its sixty-second session, held on 8 and 9 December in Tokyo, the UNU Council, inter alia:

(a) Considered the final report of an external evaluation of UNU at its fortieth year of academic activity;

(b) Adopted the UNU strategic plan 2015-2019;

(c) Considered and approved a revised biennial programme and budget for 2014-2015;

(d) Reviewed the progress made towards the establishment of a UNU Institute on Human Resources and Economic Development in Dakar.

Other meetings

19. The forty-sixth session of the Conference of Directors of UNU Research and Training Centres and Programmes and the 7th meeting of the UNU Academic Committee were held in Rome on 11 May 2014. Discussions focused on the strategic plans of the individual institutes and programmes, including such issues as staffing and budget, business model and work programme, funding and fund-raising, and current/envisaged challenges; on developments in the UNU system during the preceding year; and on administrative matters related to the University's postgraduate degree programmes.

Consolidation of two institutes

20. The UNU Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability (UNU-IAS) was formed through the merger of the University's two Japan-based research and training institutes: the UNU Institute of Advanced Studies (also called UNU-IAS, established in 1996) and the UNU Institute for Sustainability and Peace (UNU-ISP, established in 2009). The proposal to consolidate the two institutes was endorsed by the UNU Council in April 2013, and the new UNU-IAS was formally inaugurated on 1 January 2014.

21. The consolidated UNU-IAS is located in the UNU headquarters building in Tokyo. Its research programme focuses on high-level policymaking in the areas of sustainability science, biodiversity and environmental governance.

Establishment of the Centre for Policy Research

22. The UNU Centre for Policy Research (UNU-CPR) was established in 2014 at the UNU Centre in Tokyo as part of a broader effort by the UNU Rector to respond to the Secretary-General's request to enhance UNU policy relevance in the fields of peace and security as well as global development. The core mission of UNU-CPR is to generate policy research that speaks to major debates in the wider United Nations community as well as the Secretary-General's priorities in these areas.

23. UNU-CPR has two core programmes. The first focuses on the changing nature of violence and provides concrete insights into how humanitarian, development and security actors need to adapt to reduce violence and its impact on society in the context of organized crime, terrorism, criminal violence and rapid urbanization. The second programme focuses on securing developmental outcomes in fragile contexts; it draws from the engagement of UNU-CPR on development, peacebuilding and humanitarian response to understand the particular challenges of operating in the

most challenging environments, as well as on how to build the right systems to measure progress and ensure accountability. This work links to UNU-CPR support to the post-2015 development agenda, which focuses on how the United Nations system can implement the agreements that emerge in 2015.

24. Work within these programmes also incorporates direct research support to the Secretary-General's high-level independent panel on peace operations; the United Nations review of the peacebuilding architecture in 2015; the work of the World Humanitarian Summit on moving beyond the development/humanitarian divide and urban risk; and a research project on Security Council sanctions. UNU-CPR has also supported the Secretary-General's leadership on the climate change issue by organizing a major panel on climate economics at the 2014 climate summit.

Evolution of the UNU Office in New York

25. The role of the UNU Office at the United Nations in New York (UNU-ONY) is evolving, with the overarching aims of (a) making UNU more visible within the United Nations system and (b) serving as a key node in a larger network of policy connections that have potential value for UNU and its researchers. UNU-ONY helps to convey research-based policy ideas to key policymakers by, for example, holding strategic meetings, briefings and conferences, and streamlining the flow of ideas from UNU to the United Nations. The Office also seeks to assist UNU institutes in connecting with relevant decision makers and policymakers within the United Nations system.

26. In 2014, UNU-ONY hosted three visits by the UNU Rector and organized more than 50 bilateral meetings. Visits by staff from 15 UNU entities also led to several high-profile engagements with United Nations policy processes.

27. Early in the year, UNU-ONY briefed the Permanent Mission of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela on what to expect when it was elected to the Security Council. In November, UNU-ONY worked closely with the Permanent Mission of Chad to help it prepare for its December presidency of the Security Council by drafting the concept note for a thematic debate on organized crime. The UNU-ONY Head of Office also participated in formal hearings organized by both the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions.

Launch of the UNU Migration Network

28. The UNU Migration Network — a collaborative initiative of UNU-CRIS, UNU-EHS, UNU-CGM (network coordinator), UNU-IIGH and UNU-MERIT — seeks to contribute to evidence-based policymaking by assembling information on current activities and events of the global UNU system that relate to migration in the context of development. The network was launched in February; its online portal covers the migration-related work of the five institutes and provides access to more than 50 research projects and 220 publications.

Establishment of the Operating Unit on Policy-driven Electronic Governance

29. The UNU Operating Unit on Policy-driven Electronic Governance (UNU-EGOV) is an outgrowth of the electronic governance component of the former UNU International Institute for Software Technology (UNU-IIST) in Macao,

China. Following the signing of the host country agreement and bilateral agreement between UNU and the Government of Portugal on 23 May, UNU-EGOV began operating on 1 July in Guimarães, Portugal, in premises provided by the University of Minho. The focus of UNU-EGOV is on transforming the mechanisms of governance, and building effective governance capabilities, through strategic applications of information and communications technologies, with the aim of contributing to inclusive social and economic development, environmental sustainability, and peace and security.

Progress in establishing the Institute for Sustainable Development

30. The UNU Institute for Sustainable Development (L'Institut de recherche d'Alger pour le développement durable de l'Afrique; UNU-IRADDA) is on track to be set up in Algiers in 2015. Following the adoption of the statute of UNU-IRADDA by the UNU Council and the signing of the host country agreement and bilateral agreement between UNU and the Government of Algeria in November and December 2013, respectively, a UNU headquarters delegation met in Algiers in March with officials of the Government of Algeria and the National Social and Economic Council. In April, UNU received the first instalment of the Algerian Government's pledge for UNU-IRADDA. A call for applications for the directorship position of UNU-IRADDA was made in December; the selection of the successful candidate is scheduled for early in 2015.

Progress on setting up a new institute in Dakar

31. In March, based on a long-term partnership between UNU-MERIT and the Consortium pour la recherche économique et sociale (CRES), a UNU delegation visited Senegal for discussions with representatives of the Government of Senegal regarding the establishment of a UNU institute for human resources and economic development in Dakar. The host country agreement was signed at that time, but the process of finalizing overall agreement has proceeded slowly, albeit with a spurt of activity at the end of 2014.

UNU-wide evaluation

32. With UNU approaching its fortieth anniversary, in 2013 the UNU Council requested the Rector to implement an external evaluation of UNU, covering the 10-year period 2003-2012. Three experts — Rich Fuchs of Futureworks Consulting Inc. (Canada), Radha Kumar of the Delhi Policy Group (India), and Ronaldo Lemos of the Institute for Technology and Society (Brazil) — were appointed to the evaluation team. They were tasked by the UNU Council with evaluating the extent to which UNU has:

(a) Functioned effectively as a cutting-edge think tank for the United Nations;

(b) Served as an effective conduit between academic communities in developing countries and United Nations policy communities;

(c) Pursued a problem-oriented approach in its research, and generated relevant, high-quality outputs.

33. The Council further requested the evaluation team to provide advice and recommendations on how UNU could best fulfil these functions in the future.

34. The evaluation process, which began late in January 2014, included 96 respondent/key informant interviews, five focus group sessions and four student meetings, as well as the review of a large number and variety of collateral documents and briefing notes. On 28 October, the team submitted a final report entitled "A 10-year UNU-wide retrospective evaluation". That document was before the UNU Council at its sixty-second session in December.

Changes in top leadership

- Kazuhiko Takemoto was appointed Director of the UNU Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability, effective 1 January.
- Sebastian von Einsiedel was appointed Director of the UNU Centre for Policy Research, effective 1 February.
- Govindan Parayil, who had served as a UNU Vice-Rector since 29 July 2008, and concurrently as Director of UNU-IAS from 1 January 2009 to 31 December 2013, left UNU on 29 July.
- Max Bond, UNU Executive Officer, was appointed to the concurrent post of UNU Vice-Rector, effective 1 August.

Other selected highlights

35. In June, UNU-IIGH formally joined the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on the Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases, which was established by the Secretary-General under the leadership of the World Health Organization.

36. In June, UNU was offered membership in the Global Migration Group, in recognition of the expertise on migration offered by the UNU Migration Network.

37. In September, UNU-WIDER launched an updated version (3.0b) of the World Income Inequality Database. The database and its documentation are accessible on the UNU-WIDER website.

38. In October, UNU signed an agreement with the University of Minho in Portugal, whereby at least 10 academic staff of the University of Minho will dedicate 40 per cent of their research time to working with UNU-EGOV, while UNU-EGOV academic staff will contribute to the research activities of the University of Minho. The two institutions also will collaborate in the development of short course and postgraduate degree programmes.

IV. Institutional priorities

39. Under the leadership of its sixth Rector, David M. Malone, UNU has embarked on a re-appraisal of its objectives and business operations. The intent is to clarify the University's strategic direction and research focus in order to make UNU more responsive to the needs of the United Nations and to enhance its tangible impact on policy and intergovernmental deliberations.

40. The initial priorities of that effort, instituted in 2013, were:

(a) To integrate research, engagement and communications efforts so as to make UNU research outputs more accessible to policymakers;

(b) To enhance the organizational effectiveness and management of the global UNU system;

(c) To recruit high-calibre experts (researchers and communicators) who can bring in new ideas and research funds, implement projects effectively, and engage with policymakers.

41. As part of University-wide discussions to elicit new ideas on future modalities of research, capacity-building, policy development and knowledge-translation activities, the individual institutes and programmes of the UNU system developed new strategic plans. The culmination of those discussions, and the institute-level strategic plans, is the UNU strategic plan 2015-2019. This document, approved by the UNU Council at its sixty-second session in December, enumerates a number of organizational reforms and research priorities.

Organizational reforms

42. The strategic plan sets out four key organizational priorities for the 2015-2019 period.

Management excellence

43. Ensuring management excellence at all levels of operations is a priority. While the UNU Centre, through the Rector, traditionally has played a strong policy-setting role, greater autonomy in management and planning at the institute level will be encouraged. The UNU Centre henceforth will focus on providing strategic guidance to the institute directors, while simultaneously challenging them to meet new benchmarks of excellence in research, management and entrepreneurship.

44. The emphasis on management excellence includes facilitating more effective oversight by the UNU Council, as well as empowering institute advisory boards and committees to take a more active role in overseeing their institute's management, substantive orientation, and fund-raising efforts. Particular attention will be paid to appointing younger board/committee members who are actively engaged in local and international research communities.

Sustainable growth

45. The global UNU system has expanded greatly since 1985, when the first institute (UNU-WIDER) was established. That growth, however, has tended to be opportunistic — based on requests from outside entities or offers of funding for a specialized topic — rather than strategic.

46. Since March 2013, the Rectorate has been channelling proposals for new UNU units into one of two structural models — operating unit or institute — based on a new funding benchmark designed to ensure medium- and long-term financial sustainability.

47. The financial requirement for establishing an operating unit will include at least five years of assured annual core funding, typically of at least US$1.0 million, and an initial capital contribution to the UNU Endowment Fund. A full-fledged institute will be established only when a higher level of core and capital funding is assured: at least five years of annual core funding of US$2.0 million or more, and

capital contributions to the UNU Endowment Fund over a number of years, with the income reserved for operation of the institute. In both cases, the provision of suitable premises and coverage of basic running costs will also be required.

Streamlining of partnerships

48. The diverse web of UNU collaborators, supporters and associated affiliates enables the University to expand the reach of its research outputs, access the expertise of larger numbers of outstanding researchers, and identify new sources of funding. But not all partnerships have contributed to the UNU core objectives, and some have proved to be financially unstable.

49. Hereafter, the emphasis will be on top-quality collaborations that are demonstrably meaningful and outcome-oriented, and which further the research objectives of UNU. In particular, UNU institutes will be encouraged to work with nearby leading universities in collaborations that can create a dynamic research environment of benefit to both sides.

Restructuring of teaching programmes and capacity development

50. Under the UNU strategic plan 2011-2014, the University embarked on a system-wide effort to establish full-fledged postgraduate degree programmes. But that endeavour, while successful in several locations, inevitably (due to limited resources) undermined the focus on both policy relevance and research excellence.

51. While all existing UNU postgraduate degree programmes will continue to receive support — and institutes will be free to establish new postgraduate programmes when they so wish — the emphasis on postgraduate education is being scaled back. A clear preference will be given to developing doctoral-level degree programmes that have the potential to contribute to and reinforce UNU research, priority being given to programmes that include the participation and support of leading local university partners.

52. To ensure that UNU can consistently deliver original, high-quality research, capacity development activities are also likely to be given less priority over time. Capacity development activities outside of a formalized degree programme will be held to new standards of relevance and impact, beyond the mere availability of funding; they will be required to show that they fit within the overall aims of the University and bring demonstrable value, and that they do not consume resources that otherwise could be allocated to high-impact research and policy development. Capacity development initiatives in developing countries will be prioritized.

Research priorities

53. Despite its name, UNU is not (nor was it ever intended to be) a full-service "university"; it is a specialized think thank whose research contributions are defined by its unique position as a member of the United Nations system. The new strategic plan, therefore, calls for the University to refocus its expertise and resources on research topics that are of special relevance to the United Nations and its Member States, and to strengthen efforts to ensure that UNU research findings and researchers are both visible and accessible.

54. This bid for greater relevance and impact relies on more rigorous strategic planning across the UNU system, and on proactive engagement with policy. To this end, UNU institutes will overhaul their approaches to fund-raising, eschewing small grants in favour of fewer, but larger, subventions that will enable them to implement more ambitious research projects. UNU will also transform the way in which its research programmes are designed, and their outputs disseminated. The intent is to couple new, innovative research programming with the needs of policymakers by integrating medium-term "horizon" issues where UNU is able to identify critical gaps in policy expertise with research that provides insights on immediate policy challenges.

55. Under the UNU strategic plan 2015-2019, the University's research will prioritize quality and policy relevance.

High-quality research outputs

56. UNU research will emphasize quality over quantity by reducing the overall number of academic outputs in favour of fewer, higher impact publications. One component of this will be more cross-institute research that can harness the wide range of UNU in-house expertise to offer a unique, multidisciplinary perspective on pressing global issues.

Policy-relevant topics

57. The needs of policymakers will serve as a guide for UNU research. In principle, new UNU research proposals will be required to demonstrate policy relevance, with target audiences clearly identified from the outset — and with the United Nations prominent among those audiences. Small "academic" research projects aimed at limited audiences — even those for which readily available research funding exists — will be avoided.

V. Research projects

58. Under the UNU strategic plan 2011-2014, the work of UNU was grouped into five interdependent thematic clusters: (a) Development governance, (b) Global change and sustainable development, (c) Peace, security and human rights, (d) Population and health and (e) Science, technology and society. In 2014, UNU implemented 178 research projects (60 new, 70 ongoing, 48 completed during the year), of which 114 (64 per cent) were primarily focused on or in developing countries.

59. This section presents a selection of projects that produced significant outcomes/impact during the year or have been recognized as having an important policy dimension.

A. Development governance

60. **Global Re-ordering: Evolution through European Networks**. This project, funded by the European Union and implemented by a consortium of 16 partners that includes UNU-CRIS, examines the present and future role of the European Union in an emerging multipolar world. It seeks to track the changing nature of leadership on

salient themes in the fields of human security and sustainable development. The goals are to identify new global/regional risks and opportunities, and to provide ideas regarding optimal avenues for North-South cooperation in terms of multilateral and regional institutions. This four-year project will finish in 2015.

61. **Governance for Sustainable Development**. This UNU-IAS project, implemented in collaboration with the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES) and supported by the Ministry of the Environment of Japan, seeks to contribute to international discussions regarding the establishment of the sustainable development goals in the short term, and to propose policies and frameworks for a long-term transformation in human behaviour towards a sustainable society. In 2014, the project produced a series of six policy briefs, three of which were launched at a policy forum in May at United Nations Headquarters in New York, with the aim of informing the discussions of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals. Ideas from one of the briefs were included in the Working Group's outcome document.

62. **Institutions, Governance and Long-term Growth**. This multi-year project by UNU-MERIT and the French Development Agency "measured" institutions via the Institutional Profiles Database; explored the historical relationships between economic accumulation, political organization and social cohesion; and analysed the interaction between economic, political and social forces in the process of development. The project, which concluded in 2014, organized a major workshop and delivered 19 working papers.

63. **International Satoyama Initiative**. This UNU-IAS initiative promotes the maintenance and rebuilding of socio-ecological production landscapes and seascapes for the benefit of biodiversity and human well-being. The Initiative hosts the secretariat of the 158-member International Partnership for the Satoyama Initiative, and is working with IGES to analyse and systematize more than 70 case studies that are expected to contribute to United Nations processes towards the post-2015 development agenda. A toolkit on the indicators of resilience in socio-ecological production landscapes and seascapes, developed by the Initiative in collaboration with Biodiversity International, the United Nations Development Programme and IGES, was launched in November at the World Parks Congress 2014 of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature. The Initiative has also been heavily involved in reconstruction efforts after the earthquake and tsunami in Japan and related disasters of 2011, especially in the Urato Islands; this effort is expected to feed into larger processes related to disaster risk reduction.

64. **IS Academy for Migration and Development**. This academy, a multi-year project of UNU-MERIT and the Foreign Ministry of the Netherlands, sought to refine and strengthen development cooperation policies via input from both academics and policymakers. The intent was to generate new approaches to poverty reduction and sustainable development that could feed into more effective policies, as well as reinforce the scientific foundations of policymaking in migration and development while strengthening the policy relevance of research into migration and development. The project, which concluded in 2014, produced 19 policy briefs, five country reports and a policy report, and made presentations at several major conferences.

65. **Research and Communication on Foreign Aid**. This UNU-WIDER programme, completed in 2014, produced a significant number of research outputs,

including 220 UNU-WIDER working papers and 176 peer-reviewed publications. The programme website features research summaries, videos, event information and position papers. UNU-WIDER researchers presented programme lessons at various seminars, and some of the programme's findings have fed directly into the development strategies of Denmark, Finland and Sweden.

B. Global change and sustainable development

66. **Climate Change, Agricultural Trade and Food Security in Countries of ECOWAS**. This two-year project, by UNU-INRA in collaboration with the African Climate Policy Centre of the Economic Commission for Africa, seeks to assess whether agricultural production systems and trade policies in the Economic Community of West Africa States (ECOWAS) can be adjusted to cope with the impact of climate change on food security so as to promote sustainable development. The project has analysed the feasibility of the study through 13 country assessments, methodological assessment and stakeholder consultations. Information collected during the process will be combined with the country profiles to conceptualize an appropriate analytical framework.

67. **Development under Climate Change**. This UNU-WIDER project was selected as "one to watch" by the United Nations Big Data Climate Challenge (part of the build-up to the Secretary-General's climate summit in September). A key task for helping policymakers in developing countries to address the long-term uncertainties of climate change is to translate scientific and biophysical processes into economic outcomes. The project addresses this challenge by using an analytical framework that traces the economic implications of climate change. The framework has already been applied to several countries.

68. **Economics of Land Degradation**. This initiative, by UNU-INWEH in partnership with the German Agency for International Cooperation and the secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, is conducting a global study on the economic benefits of land and land-based ecosystems. The aim is to make the economics of land degradation an integral part of policy strategies and decision-making by increasing political and public awareness. UNU-INWEH, as scientific coordinator for the initiative, has developed three primary reports, for scientific communities, the private sector, and policymakers/decision makers. The third scientific meeting on the economics of land degradation was held in June, in Nairobi.

69. **IPBES Assessments and Capacity-Building**. Since 2011, UNU-IAS has led development of the assessment process for the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) through a series of international scientific expert workshops, in collaboration with UNESCO, the United Nations Environment Programme and the Governments of Japan, South Africa and the Republic of Korea. The project's official working document on the IPBES conceptual framework, supplemented by information documents on indigenous and local knowledge systems and the Asia-Pacific regional assessment, contributed significantly to the development of the IPBES conceptual framework and its work programme 2014-2018. In September-October, UNU-IAS conducted a postgraduate intensive training course specifically designed to contribute to the capacity-building

function of IPBES. UNU-IAS researchers are active participants in several IPBES task forces and expert groups.

70. **Joint research projects in Africa**. UNU-FLORES is undertaking four joint research projects in Africa: Productivity in Low-Fertility Areas and Climate Change (with UNU-INRA), Drought and Flood Risk Management (with the University of the Free State, South Africa), Integrated Water and Waste Management (with the University of Mauritius) and Soil Functioning and Food Production (with the University of Agriculture, United Republic of Tanzania). The overall aim is to review, synthesize and develop national and regional visions to promote sustainable development in African countries through situational analysis of specified countries/regions, determine gaps, and identify both challenges to and opportunities for progress.

71. **Munich Climate Insurance Initiative**. Through this initiative, launched in 2005 by Munich Re and hosted by UNU-EHS, a consortium of insurers, climate change and adaptation experts, non-governmental organizations and policy researchers is exploring the role that insurance solutions can play in adaptation to climate change. The focus is on the risks posed by climate change, both on the negotiating floor and on the ground in developing countries. UNU-EHS facilitates current projects, coordinates input into the individual projects, and ensures constant feedback of lessons learned into the climate negotiations process under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The Initiative hosted a side event during the twentieth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention in December.

72. **Potential of African Grass Species in Healing Industrial and Domestic Sickwater**. This study, by UNU-INRA in collaboration with Ebonyi State University (Nigeria), seeks to assess the potential of grass for removing effluents from industrial and domestic sickwater (contaminated) sources that are increasingly becoming an important resource for such uses as crop irrigation. A phytoengineering treatment plant has been set up using the African species of vetiver grass for a variety of industrial and urban effluents. The next step will be training and sensitization to encourage adaptation of the vetiver technology for cleaning wastewater.

73. **Water-related Sustainable Development Goals**. UNU-INWEH has continued its engagement in the deliberations around the post-2015 development agenda, particularly those pertaining to water, in partnership with the United Nations Office for Sustainable Development, Global Water Partnership and McMaster University. Building on previous work on water-related sustainable development goals, UNU-INWEH undertook a country-level analysis of 11 countries in Africa, Latin America, North America and South-East Asia with the aim of facilitating ongoing negotiations by providing evidence-based information. A two-day expert consultation was held in Hamilton in October to discuss the analyses. The project's final report will be presented at United Nations Headquarters in February 2015, in collaboration with the Department for Economic and Social Affairs and the Office for Sustainable Development.

74. **Water Yield Response to Changes in Land Use and Climate in a Semi-humid/-arid Transition Region**. This research project, by UNU-FLORES in cooperation with the Chinese Academy of Forestry and the Dresden University of Technology, focuses on the Jinghe Basin of north-west China. While afforestation

has been implemented as an effective way to conserve soil and water in degraded regions of semi-arid north-west China, this has been accompanied by a drastic reduction in water yield and lower water quality. This project evaluates land management strategies with respect to water yield and soil/water conservation goals. The results will be combined with scenarios of climate change to assess potential consequences on hydrological processes and accordingly modify and assess management strategies.

75. **West African Science Service Centre on Climate Change**. This large-scale effort seeks to develop effective climate change adaptation and mitigation measures. Its three principal components are a competence centre, a core research programme and a graduate research programme. UNU-EHS is responsible for the Centre's work package on "risk assessment and analysis" and is supporting the development of an MSc programme on climate change and human security at the University of Lomé. Outputs include a journal article, a database on floods and droughts, and a summary paper highlighting data gaps and proposing a strategy to unify data collection in West Africa.

76. **World Risk Report**. The *2014 World Risk Report*, by UNU-EHS and the Alliance Development Works/Bündnis Entwicklung Hilft, presents a "disaster risk" ranking of 171 countries around the world based on analyses of each country's vulnerability and exposure to natural hazards. The main focus is the threat from, or exposure to, key natural hazards and the effects of climate change, as well as social vulnerability in the form of each population's susceptibility and capacity to cope/adapt. The report incorporates the World Risk Index, developed by UNU-EHS, which shows the level of risk for individual countries and provides a global overview. The special focus of the 2014 edition of the report was on "cities as an area of risk".

C. Peace, security and human rights

77. **Governmental Digital Surveillance**. A comparative analysis of human rights safeguards in national regimes overseeing digital surveillance, conducted by UNU-ONY, provided the basis for a ground-breaking report on "The right to privacy in the digital age", published in August by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

78. **Justice and Security**. In the latter part of the year, at the request of the Assistant Secretary-General for Rule of Law and Security Institutions in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, UNU-ONY prepared a strategy non-paper to help improve that office's service delivery. The study provided recommendations on how that office could become more "fit for purpose" in delivering on its mandate and responsibilities, and proposed ideas for refining strategic decision-making, planning and execution.

79. **Migration, Media and Intercultural Dialogue**. UNU-GCM completed work on this research project in 2014. The project explored the extent to which the media can bridge cultural differences in the context of migration and facilitate intercultural dialogue. Outputs included a series of 10 policy reports, scholarly articles and online articles, as well as a workshop and a two-day international conference.

80. **Statelessness and Transcontinental Migration**. This UNU-GCM project, now in its final phase, focuses on a range of issues related to the well-being and recognition of people who migrate, traverse continents and attempt relocation devoid of citizenship. Outputs have included a two-day international conference, eight policy reports and several scholarly articles.

D. Population and health

81. **Indoor Air Quality and Asthma and Allergy among Malaysian Schoolchildren**. The aim of this project, a joint effort of UNU-IIGH, Uppsala University and Universiti Putra Malaysia, is to study the relationship between exposures to school indoor air pollution and asthma, allergy and respiratory symptoms among secondary schoolchildren. The project has conducted three field studies. Outputs include three journal articles. The project has secured additional research funding from the Swedish Research Council for the period 2014-2016.

82. **Innovative Wastewater Management and Reuse**. This project addresses four interconnected aspects of wastewater management: applied research, policy-relevant study (at global, regional and country levels), capacity development activities and knowledge-based synthesis of existing research. With funding from Grand Challenges Canada, UNU-INWEH is working in partnership with the Government of Uganda and a number of non-governmental organizations in Canada and Uganda to develop robust and scalable technologies as well as an innovative business model to tap private-sector resources for sustainable wastewater management.

83. **Poverty Reduction and Regional Integration: A Comparative Analysis of SADC and UNASUR Health Policies**. This international research project seeks to understand, in the context of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR), what institutional practices and methods of regional policy formation are conducive to the development of pro-poor health policies. The intent is to inform decision makers and relevant stakeholders on how to develop policies and interventions that improve equity and access to health. The project is being undertaken by UNU-CRIS in cooperation with the Open University (United Kingdom) and partners in Argentina, South Africa and the United Kingdom; it is funded by the United Kingdom Economic and Social Research Council and Department for International Development.

84. **Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WaSH) for Women and Children**. The UNU-INWEH project seeks to directly address water-health linkages in an integrated and effective manner. The overarching goal is to ensure that local governments, non-governmental organizations and community leaders have the knowledge, capacity and will to implement and practice sustainable WaSH in order to ensure good public health and well-being.

E. Science, technology and society

85. **Establishing and Sustaining the Government Chief Information Officer Function in Colombia**. This project, which seeks to strengthen the capacity of the Government of Colombia for utilizing digital technology to advance public service delivery and public policy implementation, is a collaboration between UNU-EGOV,

the Colombian Ministry of Information and Communication Technologies, and the National University of Colombia. UNU-EGOV provided the methodology for executing the project, and assists in its methodological aspects, human capacity activities and local/international collaboration efforts. Legal instruments produced by the project for establishing the function of Chief Information Officer in the executive branch of the Government of Colombia are undergoing a formal approval process.

86. **European Union Innovation Scoreboard**. Since 2001, funded by the European Commission, UNU-MERIT has been undertaking an annual comparative assessment of the research and innovation performance of European Union member States. The scoreboard also covers, for a more limited number of indicators, 10 non-European countries. The 2014 report was delivered at a joint press conference with three European Union Commissioners.

Refocusing UNU research

87. Recognizing that possibilities for synergies between UNU institutes are greater when research efforts are more focused, the UNU strategic plan 2015-2019 calls for narrowing the global UNU work programme from the five thematic clusters described above to three, namely:

- Peace and governance
- Global socioeconomic development, innovation and inclusion
- Climate and energy

88. As resources permit, these new thematic clusters may be supplemented by other substantive areas of research such as demography and migration or higher education policy.

VI. Postgraduate education

89. UNU offers specialized training opportunities for young scholars, researchers and professionals. These encompass MSc and PhD degree programmes, other advanced training programmes, fellowships/internships, training courses and workshops, and project-based capacity development. Fulfilling the needs of students from developing countries is a particular focus of UNU educational efforts.

Postgraduate degree programmes

90. UNU had four active MSc degree programmes in 2014, attended by 184 students (85 male, 99 female), of whom 39 per cent were from developing countries:

- MSc in sustainability science (by UNU-IAS, 16 students; prior to the UNU-ISP/UNU-IAS merger, this was the MSc programme in sustainability, development and peace)
- MSc in environmental governance with specialization in biodiversity (by UNU-IAS; this programme was closed late in November following the graduation of its last cohort of four students)

- Joint MSc in the geography of environmental risks and human security (by UNU-EHS in collaboration with the University of Bonn, 49 students)
- Double MSc in public policy and human development (UNU-MERIT in collaboration with Maastricht University, 107 students)

91. It is anticipated that, by the end of 2015, all of the UNU master's degree programmes will hold internationally recognized accreditation.

92. UNU also offered a PhD programme in sustainability science (by UNU-IAS, eight students).

93. A new collaborative PhD programme in integrated management of water, soil and waste, jointly implemented by UNU-FLORES and the Dresden University of Technology, will launch in April 2015.

94. UNU also collaborates with other universities to help support developing country students enrolled in specialized master's and doctoral degree programmes.

Non-degree courses

95. UNU offers advanced training opportunities that range in length from a few days to six months; some enable students to earn credit towards a degree, while others provide a UNU certificate upon completion. In 2014, UNU offered 94 non-degree courses and programmes that were attended by more than 2,300 students. These included:

96. Short-term courses (77):

- Postgraduate course on renewable energy (UNU-IAS; 2-25 April)
- Multidisciplinary approaches to emerging infectious diseases (UNU-BIOLAC; 7-10 April)
- Urbanization and health: systems approaches (UNU-IIGH; 2-6 June)
- Summer school on human capital (UNU-MERIT; 14-18 July)
- UNU intensive core courses (UNU-IAS; 8 September-14 October)
- Design and evaluation of innovation policies (UNU-MERIT; 6-10 October)
- Postgraduate course on leadership for sustainability (UNU-IAS; 14-28 October)
- International training course on mangrove biodiversity and ecosystems (UNU-INWEH; 27 October-10 November)
- Short-term training on environmental journalism (UNU-INRA; 3-14 November)
- Millennium short course in East Africa: "Exploration and development of geothermal energy" (UNU-GTP; 2-23 November)

97. Long-term courses/programmes (17):

- Gender equality studies and training programme (UNU-GEST; January-May)
- Economics of land degradation: open online course (UNU-INWEH; March-May)

- Land restoration training programme (UNU-LRT; March-September)
- Migration management diploma programme (UNU-MERIT; April-June)
- Geothermal training programme (UNU-GTP, April-October)
- Fisheries training programme (UNU-FTP; September-February 2015)
- Climate, energy and food security (UNU-IAS; September-January 2015)

Capacity development

98. UNU also seeks to enhance the education and research capacities of developing countries, and to provide additional advanced training opportunities for young researchers, through project-based capacity development. Of the projects implemented by UNU in 2014, 22 were focused on capacity development, while almost 100 others had a capacity development component. The projects included:

- Building Ecosystem Capacities (UNU-INWEH)
- Capacity Development on Mental Well-being and Disability (UNU-IIGH)
- Development of a Toolbox for Operationalizing Green Economy Transitions at a Sub-National Level in Africa (UNU-INRA)
- Development of International Water Quality Guidelines for Ecosystems (UNU-EHS)
- Global Leadership Training Programme in Africa (UNU-IAS)
- Monitoring and Management of Persistent Organic Pollutants in Asia (UNU-IAS)
- Regional Growth and Development in Southern Africa (UNU-WIDER)

VII. Events

99. UNU seeks to maximize the impact of its work by convening public conferences, seminars, symposiums, lectures and workshops. These events provide a venue for sharing knowledge, offer valuable networking opportunities, and help to put a personal face on UNU for the general public. Among events of special note in 2014 were the following:

100. **United Nations climate summit thematic session**. On 23 September, as part of the Secretary-General's climate summit 2014, UNU hosted a thematic session on the theme "The economic case for climate action" at United Nations Headquarters in New York. The session, organized by UNU-CPR in partnership with UNU-EHS and UNU-ONY, was co-chaired by the President of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, and the Prime Minister of Ethiopia, Hailemariam Dessalegn, and moderated by the Secretary-General of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, Angel Gurría. Some 200 high-level representatives of government, civil society and academia attended, including several prominent figures in the climate debate.

101. **UNU Conversation Series**. During the year, 13 events were held as part of the public UNU Conversation Series at UNU Headquarters in Tokyo. At those events, hosted and moderated by the UNU Rector, influential experts, world leaders and respected scholars share personal insights on contemporary global issues and engage

with the audience. Speakers in 2014 included the Minister of Finance of Timor-Leste, Emilia Pires; the former President of Slovenia, Danilo Türk; the Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations, Antonio de Aguiar Patriota; Glen S. Fukushima, Senior Fellow at the Center for American Progress; Sir Lawrence Freedman, Professor at King's College London; and the Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs, the Legal Counsel, Miguel de Serpa Soares.

102. **UNESCO events**. In response to a request by the Director-General of UNESCO, Irina Bokova, for more "debates of ideas", the UNU Rector tasked the UNU Office at UNESCO with reinvigorating such debates by organizing two public conferences each year. In 2014, these were on the themes "21st century wars (2003-2014): the right to intervene, the responsibility to protect. What next?" (27 February) and "The other tragedy: war, revolution and world heritage sites" (12 June). Both conferences were presided over by the Director-General of UNESCO and featured keynote lectures by major global experts and actors.

103. Other significant occasions among the 379 public events convened by UNU in 2014 included:

- "Addressing the persistence of gender inequalities in conflict prevention and peace processes" (4 and 5 April); a conference organized by UNU-GEST and the University of Iceland to stimulate critical thinking in advance of the 2015 high-level review of progress on Security Council resolution 1325 (2000).
- "'Governance', 'education' and the architecture of the sustainable development goals" (22 May at United Nations Headquarters); a policy forum organized by UNU-IAS to inform the discussions of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals.
- "The European Union in international affairs" (22-24 May); a conference co-organized by UNU-CRIS.
- "Statelessness and transcontinental migration" (27 and 28 July) and "Les révolutions arabes: état des lieux" ("The Arab revolutions: the current situation"; 2 and 3 June); conferences organized and co-hosted, respectively, by UNU-GCM.
- "Institutional reforms for transformation, inclusion, and sustainability" (29 and 30 June, Hanoi) and "Inequality: measurement, trends, impact, and policies" (5 and 6 September, Helsinki); development conferences organized by UNU-WIDER.
- "Reviving Chapter VIII" (29 and 30 September, Bruges); a conference hosted by UNU-CRIS that focused on enhancing cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations.
- "Rising income inequality: trends — and measures to prevent and reverse it" (22 October, Geneva); a policy seminar co-organized by UNU-WIDER.
- "The rise of data post-2015 — empowered citizens, accountable institutions" (27-30 October): the eighth International Conference on Theory and Practice of Electronic Governance (ICEGOV2014), co-organized by UNU-EGOV.
- "Managing structural transformation post-2015" (18 November, at United Nations Headquarters): the eighteenth UNU-WIDER annual lecture, featuring C. Peter Timmer.

- "Future perspectives on innovation and governance in development" (26-28 November, Maastricht), organized by UNU-MERIT.
- "Mental well-being, disability and disaster risk reduction" (27 and 28 November, Tokyo); a United Nations expert group meeting co-organized by UNU-IIGH to provide input into the Third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, to be held in 2015.

VIII. Communication and dissemination

104. UNU disseminates information about its research and activities through both print and electronic media. The focus of UNU communication and dissemination is on:

(a) Informing policymakers, practitioners and scholars about the details of UNU research;

(b) Providing non-specialist audiences, including the general public, with an overview of UNU efforts to address current and emerging issues;

(c) "Translating" relevant information into a form that can be easily understood and utilized by high-level decision makers and policymakers.

105. The aim of UNU communication and dissemination is to get relevant information to the "right" audiences, in the most useful form and in a timely manner.

106. In 2014, UNU researchers published 34 books and 81 chapters in edited volumes, 233 articles in peer-reviewed journals and 44 other articles, and 13 special journal issues. UNU also published 304 working and discussion papers, 34 policy briefs, and 51 research/technology briefs (most of which are available on UNU websites) as well as numerous website articles, videos/podcasts, proceedings and conference papers, and other publications.

107. UNU websites received more than 6.77 million page views by some 2.85 million users in 2014. Top among the websites of the UNU system in terms of page views were the main unu.edu website (3.31 million), Our World (838,000), UNU-MERIT (814,000) and UNU-IAS (686,000).

108. UNU also utilizes the major social media channels. At the end of the year, UNU had more than 40,400 followers on Twitter — led by UNU Centre (22,745), Our World (6,531), UNU-WIDER (1,913) and UNU-MERIT (1,406). UNU also had more than 37,000 "likes" on Facebook, led by UNU Centre (11,109), Our World (6,510), the UNU Japanese Twitter account (4,107), UNU-MERIT (4,033) and UNU-IAS (3,800).

109. The main UNU YouTube channel had more than 5,150 subscribers, and the more than 400 videos that it hosts have been viewed some 5.4 million times to date. In 2014, videos on the channel were viewed more than 370,000 times — equivalent to 1.4 million minutes watched. The YouTube Channels of UNU-MERIT and UNU-WIDER also continued to grow in 2014 (375 and 270 subscribers, respectively).

IX. Financial and human resources

110. UNU receives no funds from the regular United Nations budget; it relies on contributions — from host Governments of the University's institutes, foundations, agencies, international organizations and other sources — and investment income from the UNU endowment fund. In 2014, UNU received $46.9 million in contributions from 22 Governments and some 112 other sources.

111. The estimated UNU budget for the 2014–2015 biennium is $131.4 million: $47.8 million of special programme contributions, $37.0 million of operating contributions, $32.8 million of endowment fund income, and cumulative surplus carried forward/other income of $13.8 million.

112. It is intended that this budget will be expended during the biennium on academic activities ($66.0 million), personnel costs ($41.8 million) and general expenses ($23.6 million, including a one-time assignment of $2.1 million for the refurbishment of the UNU headquarters building).

113. These budget projections were formulated with extreme prudence; any additional contributions received during the biennium will be used to support existing or new academic activities.

Personnel

114. UNU enjoys a unique blend of human assets. UNU staff members have expertise in research that spans a wide range of vital issues, and in effective analysis, "knowledge translation" and communication.

115. As at the end of 2014, the global UNU system had a personnel complement of 479 (35 per cent were developing country nationals; 44 per cent were women).

Annex

Members of the Council of the United Nations University

Mohamed H. A. Hassan (Sudan), Chair of the UNU Council

Nobuyasu Abe (Japan), Commissioner of the Japan Atomic Energy Commission

Jean-Pierre Bourguignon (France), President of the European Research Council

Rahma Bourqia (Morocco), Director, National Evaluation Authority of the Education System, Training and Scientific Research, Morocco

Cristovam Buarque (Brazil), Member of the Brazilian Senate

Fiona Caldicott (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland), Immediate Past Principal of Somerville College, University of Oxford

Gajaraj Dhanarajan (Malaysia), Chairman, Board of Governors at Wawasan Open University

Zellynne Doloris Jennings-Craig (Jamaica), Former Director of the School of Education/Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Education at the University of the West Indies

Jin Xiaoming (China), Director General of the Department of International Cooperation at the Ministry of Science and Technology

Konstantin Khudoley (Russian Federation), Chief of the European Studies Department, School of International Relations, Saint Petersburg State University

Lily Kong (Singapore), Vice-Provost for Academic Personnel at the National University of Singapore

Lydia Shouleva (Bulgaria), Managing Partner of Business Intellect, Ltd.

Mala Singh (South Africa), Professor Extraordinaire at the Centre for Higher Education Research, Teaching and Learning at Rhodes University